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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3219
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1511
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3564
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2950
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
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RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000921

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: KYRGYZSTAN: AMBASSADOR OPENS BATKEN BORDER POST,
PART I

REF: A. BISHKEK 488

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 380

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Classified By: Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: On August 11, the Ambassador opened a U.S.-funded border post along the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan border in the volatile southern Batken Oblast. During the event, a senior Border Service officer expressed concerns about incursions into the country by foreign militants fleeing the conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is Part I of two cables describing the Ambassador's trip to the Batken Oblast. Part II, highlighting discussions on the war in Afghanistan and the current economic situation in the region, will follow septel. End Summary.

ON THE DUSTY ROADS OF SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN

[1](#)2. (SBU) On August 11, the Ambassador traveled from Osh to the Kadamjai border crossing in the volatile southern Batken Oblast. The route to the Batken outpost wound through small towns and villages seemingly forgotten by the rest of civilization. The Ambassador's motorcade passed small farms drying tobacco leaves in the front yards and barns, in preparation for export to Kazakhstan or Russia. Also drying on the side of the road were piles of animal dung, to be used as an inexpensive alternative to firewood for heating and cooking in the winter.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The landscape of eastern Batken Oblast was barren and peppered with small hills and rock formations. The only sources of water were small streams and irrigation canals, which were often filled with swimming children trying to beat the summer heat. In a bleak, windswept Muslim cemetery, a throng of men conducted an Islamic burial service. They were still at it when the Ambassador took the same road to return to Osh hours later.

OPENING CEREMONIES

14. (SBU) The Ambassador, together with Border Service Deputy Chairman Colonel Rysbek Mirzamatov, opened the new "Green Border Post" at the Kadamjai crossing, on the Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan border. The event, complete with complimentary speeches by the Ambassador and the senior Border Service official, the playing of national anthems, and a ribbon cutting, marked the official handover of a building and equipment funded jointly by the Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) Program and U.S. Central Command. This was the ninth out of 24 "Green Border Posts" planned for erection along the Kyrgyz borders (Ref A and B). The ceremony ended with a tour of the donated structure, followed by a luncheon in a nearby garden.

THREAT OF INCURSIONS WORRIES BORDER SERVICE COLONEL

15. (C) The Ambassador engaged Colonel Mirzamatov in a discussion of his concerns about rising Islamic fundamentalism in Batken and the threat of incursions by extremists. Mirzamatov told the Ambassador that, although he has some ideological concerns about rising local Islamic fundamentalism, his greatest worries involve the threat of incursions by Islamic fundamentalists from Afghanistan and Pakistan. He noted that the pressure inflicted on the Taliban and other terrorist groups by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and the Pakistan Army in Pakistan could drive the extremists into Kyrgyz territory.

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16. (C) Mirzamatov dismissed the idea that Kyrgyzstan might become a refuge for Uzbek fundamentalists and terrorists escaping Uzbek President Islam Karimov's tight security controls. He claimed that, although there are tensions along the borders that have yet to be demarcated and delimited, it is in Kyrgyzstan's common interests with Uzbekistan to fight terrorism. However, terrorists from Afghanistan and Pakistan, he believed, could use Kyrgyzstan as a safe haven. Colonel Mirzamatov asserted that he was "totally invested in the fight" and that the Kyrgyz people unanimously supported government efforts to combat terrorism. He expressed gratitude to the U.S. for assisting Kyrgyzstan in these efforts.

GFOELLER